

DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 252 252

JC 850 004

AUTHOR Nakamura, Caroline; And Others
TITLE Write to Learn: Writing-Across-the-Curriculum at Kapiolani Community College. A Panel Presentation.
PUB DATE Nov 84
NOTE 14p.; Papers presented at the Pacific Western Division Conference of the Community College Humanities Association (San Diego, CA, November 8-10, 1984).
PUB TYPE Speeches/Conference Papers (150) -- Reports - Descriptive (141) -- Collected Works - General (020)
EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Community Colleges; *Content Area Writing; Curriculum Design; *Interdisciplinary Approach; Program Descriptions; Program Development; Two Year Colleges; *Writing Instruction; *Writing Processes
IDENTIFIERS *University of Hawaii Kapiolani Community College; *Writing Across the Curriculum

ABSTRACT

Three contributions to a panel discussion on writing-across-the-curriculum at Kapiolani Community College (KCC) are presented. First, "Why Writing-Across-the-Curriculum: Background and Context," by Caroline Nakamura, reviews programs offered across the country, discusses the need for such programs given the decline in students' writing ability, and highlights the relevance of writing-across-the-curriculum approaches given recent findings on the nature and function of writing. Next, "Writing-Across-the-Curriculum at KCC: A Case Study," by Robert Fearrien, traces the history of the college's writing program and examines the assumptions and procedures that guided the development of the project. Finally, "Designing a Writing-Across-the-Curriculum Program: The Contagion Model," by Sheldon Hershinow, offers guidelines for curriculum development based on the assumptions that writing is a continuous and inescapable part of every student's career, that it is a complex activity that requires continual practice, and that its presence is necessary in every sphere of the curriculum, since writing is a fundamental mode of learning and discovery. Hershinow also underscores the importance of an interested faculty, a freshman writing program, and a committed program coordinator. (HB)

* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *

ED252252

WRITE TO LEARN: WRITING-ACROSS-THE-CURRICULUM
AT KAPIOLANI COMMUNITY COLLEGE

A PANEL PRESENTATION

WHY WRITING-ACROSS-THE-CURRICULUM: BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT
by
Caroline Nakamura, Instructor in Literature

WRITING-ACROSS-THE-CURRICULUM AT KAPIOLANI COMMUNITY COLLEGE:
A CASE STUDY
by
Robert Fearrien, Instructor in History

DESIGNING A WRITING-ACROSS-THE-CURRICULUM PROGRAM:
THE CONTAGION MODEL
by
Sheldon Hershinow, Instructor in Literature

MODERATOR, George O'Donnell, Instructor in History

Presented at the Community College Humanities Association
Pacific Western Division Conference
November 8-10, 1984
San Diego, California

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION
CENTER (ERIC)

☒ This document has been reproduced as
received from the person or organization
originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve
reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this docu-
ment do not necessarily represent official NIE
position or policy.

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS
MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
S. Hershinow

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES
INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

JC 850 004

WHY WRITING ACROSS THE CURRICULUM: BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

Writing across the curriculum is one of the most significant movements in education in the last fifty years. After its beginnings in 1974 at Minnesota's Carleton College, it has spread throughout the nation. The extent of the interest in writing across the curriculum can be seen in the October, 1984 issue of The Forum for Liberal Education, which focuses on various writing across the curriculum programs in the country. The University of Massachusetts at Amherst, for example, has instituted a junior-year writing requirement designed by the major departments. Similarly, students at Ithaca College have courses in writing available at all levels. These writing seminars are offered through disciplinary departments. And, at the University of Pennsylvania the Writing Across the University Program offers three types of discipline courses, corresponding to student expertise and grade level, which integrate the teaching of writing into the course content. Other similar programs are being conducted at the University of Chicago, Eastern Oregon State College, Kalamazoo College, Moravian College, Orange Coast College, Pima College, University of Wisconsin--Madison, University of Michigan, University of Texas--Austin, and University of California--Berkeley. The list continues to grow, indicating the wide acceptance of the importance of writing in all disciplines.

Writing across the curriculum assumes the value of writing in all curricula that make up the academic world. Writing across the curriculum programs have been developed in response to two concerns: the concern to improve writing performance and the concern to improve the learning ability of students.

Reports such as "A Nation at Risk: The Imperative for Educational Reform" (A Report to the Nation and the Secretary of Education by the National Commission on Excellence in Education) have called public attention to the crisis in literacy, and although this crisis may be exaggerated in the media, the steady drop in SAT scores and reports of high school and college instructors attest to the reality of poor student writing. In an effort to correct this problem colleges have expanded their offerings in composition. However, although increased offerings in composition are important, this solution is not sufficient. Composition instructors have been aware for years that students do not learn to write by taking one freshman composition course. Writing is a complex activity, a skill that requires constant practice to develop. It cannot be learned by memorizing methods of organization and techniques of sentence combining. To learn to write well, students need to write often and consistently throughout their college careers. Writing improves with practice and writing competency often declines after freshman composition courses. Because students write less, their prose deteriorates. According to the Dartmouth Study (1963) seniors wrote worse than they did as freshmen. The Harvard Study (1978) showed that seniors in science wrote worse than their freshmen counterparts, while seniors in humanities wrote better than their freshmen counterparts. These studies establish some connection between writing frequency and writing competence. Writing across the curriculum programs attempt to encourage writing at all levels and in all courses. Continuous reinforcement is the way to bring about improvement in writing ability. Writing in content areas becomes a natural extension of skills learned in freshman composition courses. In some ways writing is a more natural activity in discipline areas. One of the difficulties in composition courses is that

the subject matter is writing, and we do not write writing; we write about something. Disciplines provide definite subject matter and more clearly defined purposes and reasons for writing.

Equally troubling is the observation that students often write correctly in terms of grammar and usage, but their writing reveals a superficiality and banality that suggest the inability to think logically and analytically. One of the most significant changes in composition pedagogy in the last decade is the shift in consciousness from writing as product to writing as process. This shift is related to British studies in the 1960s and 1970s, particularly the research led by James Britton, who conceived of writing as a mode of discovery and learning. Writing is therefore not separable from thought. In the "Forward" to Writing and Learning Across the Curriculum 11-16, James Britton affirms the importance of the role of language and learning in all parts of the curriculum. He cites the Bullock Committee's ("Bullock Report, A Language For Life") recommendation that "all teachers should seek to foster learning in their particular areas by taking responsibility for the language development of their students in that area." Other studies have explored the link between writing and cognitive development. According to Annette Bradford, "Cognitive Immaturity and Remedial College Writers" (in The Writer's Mind), training in writing helped students make "the transition from concrete-situational thinking to abstract-categorical thinking." Janet Emig observed in "Writing As a Mode of Learning" that the most effective learning occurs when learning is reinforced and "writing through its inherent re-inforcing cycle involving hand, eye, and brain marks a uniquely powerful multi-representational mode for learning." She adds that clear writing is that writing "which signals . . . the nature of conceptual relationships, whether they be coordinate, subordinate, superordinate, causal, or something other."

The shift in thinking of writing as product with emphasis on style and correctness to seeing writing as process related to exploration, discovery, and invention makes writing more accessible to other disciplines as a tool for learning ideas. Instructors in disciplines other than English may feel uncomfortable with matters of style and rhetoric, but they can often deal more effectively than the English teacher with teaching students to write chemistry or history or sociology. Writing is an activity by which students learn content. The recognition that writing is related to cognitive development suggests that writing may not just be a way to estimate and measure cognitive development, but that it may, more importantly, be a tool through which students can develop cognitive maturity. Writing then is a way of learning and should be of concern to all teachers in all disciplines.

Recent literature concerning writing recognizes that we write for different purposes, and that all writing has different functions. James Britton designates three functions of writing: the transactional, expressive, and poetic. Expressive writing is written by the writer for himself. Transactional writing is an attempt to communicate something to the reader. Poetic writing is creative and imaginative. Britton sees expressive writing as the basis of both transactional and poetic, because understanding new information and material means relating it to what we already know, not just summarizing it or giving an account of it, but expressing a response to it. Expressive writing helps the process of converting unfamiliar material into new knowledge. However, in the studies made of school writing recorded in Writing and Learning Across the Curriculum 11-16, the figures

indicated that most school writing was transactional. The priority was placed upon writing as an end product to demonstrate knowledge that had already been acquired. The obvious need was more attention to the expressive function of writing. Both writing as process and writing as product are important in discipline areas and form the theoretical basis for the Writing Across the Curriculum Program at Kapiolani Community College.

Expressive writing or what Linda Flower calls "writer-based prose" can be used in all disciplines to help students learn content. This kind of informal writing can take the form of journals in which students record their responses to the material under study. Informal writing can also be short in-class exercises that interrupt the lecture to give students a chance to respond to the ideas being presented or to explain, in their own words, the concept being discussed. These five-minute writing assignments may develop more active and involved listeners. Similar exercises can be used at the end of the class sessions to help students articulate what it is they understand in the day's lecture. One useful question, for example, is: "What is the most significant thing you learned in class today?". These kinds of expressive writing can be an aid not only in reinforcing learning, but they can also facilitate discussion, if students are asked to share their responses with others. Writing of this kind is primarily for the students; it is a way to help them learn.

Transactional writing or "reader-based prose" is concerned with communicating ideas already learned. It is product oriented and generally graded. By demanding more writing in discipline areas, instructors provide students with greater opportunities to increase their writing competency and improve the ultimate product. However, since process is an important part of the writing activity, many instructors use the sequence approach, and rather than ask for a term paper after six weeks of study, they require students to do a sequence of assignments that ultimately produce the final term paper. Here the process is underscored, and therefore students learn about the process of learning itself and can think more critically about the material being studied.

The conception of writing as a fundamental form of discovery and the concern with better writing performance are part of the same process. The process that produces the final product is the same process that produces clarity and understanding. The implications are obvious. Since writing helps students think and learn better, colleges and universities need to demand writing in all classes and at all levels.

References:

- Emig, Janet. "Writing As a Mode of Learning." College Composition and Communication, 28 (May, 1977), 122-128.
- Flower, Linda. "Writer-Based Prose: A Cognitive Basis for Problems in Writing." College English, 41 (September, 1979), 19-37.
- Hays, Jarice, et al. eds. The Writer's Mind: Writing As a Mode of Thinking. Urbana: National Council of Teachers of English, 1983.
- Martin, Nancy, et al. Writing and Learning Across the Curriculum 11-16. London: Schools Council Publications, 1976.

WRITING ACROSS THE CURRICULUM
AT KAPIOLANI COMMUNITY COLLEGE
A CASE STUDY

Before discussing the "Writing Across the Curriculum" approach at our College, it would be worthwhile for the reader/hearer to know something about us. Kapiolani Community College is an urban city-center college in the heart of Honolulu. It is one of seven community colleges in the University of Hawaii System, and offers occupational programs in Business Education, Secretarial Science, Legal Assisting, Hotel Management and Operations, Foods Preparation and Management, and Nursing and Allied Health, in addition to transfer courses in Liberal Arts. About 55% of our approximately 5000 students are in occupational programs, the remaining 45% in Liberal Arts. We are part of a state system of higher education, funded out of a state general fund whose expenditures are determined by the University hierarchy's recommendations and state legislative actions.

At our College Writing Across the Curriculum is a little over four years old. It has emerged as a successful project through several stages of development. It is my purpose to trace the history of that development to examine the steps we followed and the assumptions and procedures that guided the project. It is our hope that some of the approaches we used and the conclusions we can draw may be of assistance to others.

The project had its inception from initiatives taken by instructional faculty. One of our Language Arts instructors, Ruth Lucas, applied for and received a grant to attend the Iowa Writing Institute on the subject of Writing Across the Curriculum. It was the intent of the grant that she would return to the College and serve as a catalyst for this project at the College, which of course she did.

Soon after faculty members were polled concerning their views on writing. The survey revealed that our faculty firmly believed in the value of writing in their courses, understanding that it complemented their instruction and considerably assisted student learning. Fully 98% of the faculty indicated that academic success in their courses was dependent to some degree on writing effectiveness. Many faculty members, however, felt their students did not write well. Many instructors also revealed that they were already requiring students to write in their classes. This finding seemed to be widespread throughout the College and particularly so in the Liberal Arts disciplines. This was encouraging to all concerned, and prompted the Liberal Arts chairpersons to suggest Good Writing as an area of "Selective Emphasis" at the College, one that would nurture student learning and gain the College recognition for encouraging and assisting students to write well. Administrative acceptance of this proposal was speedily given and implied future monetary and other support, which, as it turned out, was generously furnished.

Thus from the very beginning we had support of faculty and administration and what fast became an irresistible momentum in recognition of the need for improvement of writing and concomitant critical thinking and organizing skills. This was additionally supported by a growing national consensus similar to that at our College.

You should know too that our College had already weathered the stresses of growth and expansion and had settled down into a status as an established, relatively conservative institution whose programs were recognized and successful. We were "ready" for something more, some exercising of the energies and creative capacities of faculty. We only hoped that students were equally "primed" for the additional demands we would shortly make of them. They seemed to be: a survey of students at this time showed that 52% of our students believed that they have "average" writing ability, 16% said "poor" or "don't know" and only 34% indicated that they were good writers in their own view. And we were provided further reassurance by the finding that 41% of our students felt strongly that the ability to write effectively would affect their success in their future careers. (Not as many thought that good writing skills would be essential in achieving success in their College courses!)

We were therefore presented with a charge from all concerned. When Ruth Lucas returned from Iowa she and George O'Donnell, our moderator here today, took the project in hand, organizing a workshop on the topic for the spring of 1981. The facilitator for this workshop was Dr. Paul Diehl of the University of Iowa who helped propose and develop the Iowa Institute on Writing. The three-day workshop provided for all of us who were participants an opportunity to become acquainted with Dr. Diehl's own studies on the role of writing in a liberal education, our colleagues' reasons for requiring writing in their courses and the techniques of writing instruction that they employ. We also talked about various strategies for instructor comments on student papers and discussed each other's writing assignments. We examined sample student papers. Out of it all came a sense of commitment and a renewed realization of the importance of writing to our instruction as well as practical suggestions about how to incorporate writing into our classes.

Following that 1981 workshop members of the humanities department joined with those of the other three departments in Liberal Arts in forming a Writing Across the Curriculum committee. The committee functioned as a forum for the exchange of information and suggestion, and for the design of a statement to the College of the rationale and intents of those who were promoting the project at the College. That committee continues to function in that way, meeting occasionally as circumstances dictate. In the last three years we have had the services of a coordinator who is furnished released time to direct the project. Faculty members too have been furnished with extra released time or overload to work on the project. The administration has from the very first provided us with the resources and support to encourage our efforts. However a part of the strength of the movement at our College is that it has been a "grass-roots" effort, essentially

initiated and conducted by instructional faculty.

Other concomitant benefits have included the creation of Writing Labs at both of our campuses, staffed with student paraprofessionals and faculty supervision. As we have launched into more extensive writing activities in our classes, these Writing Labs have furnished invaluable assistance to our students. A course in student tutorials has been designed to provide student tutors for the Writing Labs and for other courses. Students find further opportunity for the enhancement of their skills in an ambitious literary magazine and the college newspaper.

The College catalog reflects our emphasis on writing in general curricular statements and in the writing competencies students are expected to achieve in any of our programs. Many specific course competencies also printed in the College catalog are directed to writing skills. We have not yet moved toward requiring "Writing Intensive" courses at the College, though our sister institution, the University of Hawaii at Manoa, is moving in that direction. At present we are in what my colleague calls the "contagion-based" phase, and if we had our preference we would probably remain there. The present informality of approach, without the stresses and academic decisions that might come with some "requirement-based" approach suits us fine.

From these beginnings the movement has grown at the College, assisted by grants, the appointment of the coordinator, the incorporation of writing into course competencies, the creation of the Writing Labs and of a Source-Book that surveyed the whole project. This Source-Book was furnished to participants in a University-wide symposium sponsored by the College in April of this year.

All this has earned us a fair amount of local recognition as a leader in this field in the Islands. Members of our faculty have provided assistance to other Colleges in the System in their development of a similar program. The College has been generous in funding grants under Title III to relate particular courses to the project's goals.

At our College the humanities department includes the disciplines of literature, religion, philosophy, American studies, and history, as well as the fine arts and performing arts. From the very first members of the humanities department were actively involved with this project. We comprised a large share of the original workshop members and since that time have been able to proselytize in our department to draw more faculty into our activities. Both full-time and part-time faculty from the department were included and were treated equally in the responsibilities and rewards of participation in the project. We have taken this project into account in our hiring process, requiring commitment to a writing emphasis in the minimum or desirable qualifications for positions for which we are hiring at the College, especially in the liberal arts.

At the outset faculty members who participated in the project were guided by certain assumptions concerning the purposes and nature of writing at the College. These were not so inflexible that faculty could not adapt them to their course needs, producing thereby a variety of individual course writing approaches. For example, a prevailing assumption was that the specialist in each discipline knows best the kind of writing students should be expected to produce. Another was that writing assists learning, and that stress on writing mechanics should not take precedence over analysis and expressions of ideas. Our perception, too, is that students should have a variety of writing experiences directed to a variety of audiences. We have discussed "sequencing" of writing experiences and other ways of relating writing to course content.

For the future? We have set ourselves a goal of drawing more of the occupational faculty into the project, and cross-disciplinary, cross-departmental cooperation has been suggested. We are also planning to re-work the Writing Across the Curriculum Source-Book to include only exemplary assignments that fully illustrate the principles upon which the project is based. And we are considering refinement of our own writing goals and the communication of these and other facets of our project to teachers in the high schools in our area. The hope is that we can better coordinate writing instruction up and down the instructional ladder.

What from our experience might be useful to others? We advance with some trepidation into this subject because self-evidently what worked for us might not necessarily work for others. Each College is very different, as we have discovered even within our own System, one in which there is a fair amount of intercollegiate communication. Probably much of the structure for assisting students with their writing is already in place at your College. I am speaking of placement testing, remedial and developmental writing (and reading) courses, and Writing Labs. If so you are already halfway there!

With these disclaimers we might suggest the following:

- 1) Assume that whatever works for any innovative curricular approach will help you in this area too. Getting administrative support, stipends, grants, released time, creating workshops, establishing and rewarding leadership -- all these are essential ingredients of success.
- 2) Let the inspiration start with faculty. Probably already your college is at one of various stages of development of a WAC program. Build from where you are, letting the movement spread outward in an osmosis-like fashion.
- 3) Buttress your activities with faculty and student surveys and use the facts and figures to convince your colleagues and administration of the need for a fully-developed program.
- 4) Try to include faculty from as wide an array of disciplines as possible from the outset. Gingerly suggest for example to the math and science people how they too can benefit from interaction with colleagues with regard to writing. Expect however that the greater amount of participation

will come from the humanities and social sciences faculty, in addition of course from the English department.

5. Arrange a committee of believers and set the committee some specific tasks, e.g., drafting a statement regarding the role of writing at your college and creating opportunities to do practical things like critiquing writing assignments and exploring how best to comment on and evaluate student papers, all in a climate of mutual helpfulness.
6. Don't assume that instruction in writing or responsibility for good writing lies only with Language Arts faculty. Wake up students to the fact that they will be expected to do good writing in all their courses.
7. Kick back and enjoy the fruits of your labors. Feel satisfaction in whatever successes you achieve. Exercise further ingenuity in achieving instructional goals through writing and earn further self-satisfaction.

For us the results have been satisfying. Students are experiencing more writing in their classes and recognize this as a necessary adjunct to their college instruction. Faculty participating have seen a steady improvement in writing in their classes, with a related improvement in abilities to reflect on and make application of ideas and information. Students' confidence in their ability to write has grown. The feeling of the participants in the effort at Kapiolani is that Writing Across the Curriculum is possible. And worthwhile.

DESIGNING A WRITING ACROSS THE CURRICULUM PROGRAM: THE CONTAGION MODEL

Before discussing the different methods of designing a WAC program let me explain briefly the way in which I became interested in this question. Since joining the faculty at Kapiolani Community College some nine years ago I have taught, exclusively, introductory courses in Literature and American Studies. However, for the first decade of my teaching career I was primarily a writing instructor. My earlier experience ranges from intermediate school teaching through remedial courses for underprepared college students and Freshman composition to career writing skills for Junior and Senior year business students and advanced composition for English majors. During this time I was, for five years, the English department at a tiny liberal arts college in Honolulu where it was a simple matter for me to talk informally with my colleagues in other disciplines about the role of writing in their courses. Later in my career, at Kapiolani Community College, I taught American Studies as well as English courses and was able to experience first hand the benefits--and difficulties--of integrating writing into what writing-across-the-curriculum researchers usually call "content courses" (as if to imply that writing courses have no academic content). Thus, when faculty from several disciplines began to express interest in emphasizing writing in courses throughout the liberal arts curriculum, it was natural for me to add my voice to what soon became a lively chorus.

As my colleague, Robert Fearrien, has explained, writing-across-the-curriculum at Kapiolani was from the beginning a grass roots movement, initiated and carried by instructional faculty in a rather informal, diffuse manner. Our initiative began to spread and eventually flower into what could be called a program, while the idea of writing-across-the-curriculum was the subject of much national discussion and research. But my interest, like that of most of my colleagues, was directed almost exclusively to what we were doing at home. With the assistance of outside consultants such as Paul Diehl and Carl Klaus from the Iowa Institute of Writing, we worked on ways of better using writing in our own courses and on ways of involving more colleagues and students.

As is so often the case, we were forced to shift our attention because of outside pressures from "the system," in this case the University of Hawaii System, of which we are a part. The College of Arts and Sciences at the University of Hawaii at Manoa, the main campus of the system, began what turned out to be a long and difficult process of reappraising its core requirements. Among the proposed revisions was a provision that would require Baccalaureate students to complete, in addition to Freshman English, five courses designated by a special review committee as being "writing-intensive." Since the liberal arts curriculum at Kapiolani is intended primarily as a transfer program feeding students into the main campus for their upperclass years, any change at Manoa would have a significant impact on us.

After initial excitement at Hawaii's flagship campus finally recognizing the importance of something already being addressed by other vessels in the convoy, members of our WAC committee began to have serious doubts about the wisdom of such a proposal. For one thing, labelling

certain courses "writing-intensive" implies that writing is of little consequence in all of the other subjects. Besides, how can one decide how much and what kind of writing should count? Should we set a standard based on number of words written? Number of pages? Number of assignments? Should only formal writing count or also informal and expressive writing? What about earlier drafts of formal papers? After all, isn't the process as important as the finished product? After many frustrating discussions about possible requirements for writing-intensive courses, the WAC committee decided that it did not particularly like the whole approach and that we should continue to go our own way while waiting to see what would finally happen at Manoa.

It was at this point that I heard a talk by Carl Klaus, director of the Iowa Writing Institute, that helped me to understand more clearly the nature of the problem we were having in deciding the best direction for our program at Kapiolani. As keynote speaker at a week-long workshop on writing-across-the-curriculum directed by the Iowa Writing Institute and co-sponsored by the University of Hawaii at Manoa and Kapiolani Community College, Klaus outlined the history of the writing-across-the-curriculum movement and discussed ways of designing programs. He pointed out that the many initiatives launched at colleges and universities across the country during the past decade generally are of two types: (1) those that impose a pattern of specific course requirements and (2) those that develop in faculty a widespread commitment to writing without formal course requirements. His discussion of these two different types of WAC programs instantly crystallized my thoughts about what we have done and should continue to do at Kapiolani Community College.

Requirement based programs, I learned, have been instituted at such diverse schools as the University of Michigan, University of Maryland, University of Texas, and the University of South Alabama. These programs, in one form or another, use a writing-intensive approach in which certain courses across the disciplines are singled out for special attention to writing. In some cases they are taught by subject matter specialists, in others by composition specialists. For example, at the University of Michigan every student takes one course in which an instructor in the student's major certifies each student as a capable writer in that subject at that level. The University of Maryland, on the other hand, requires one course taught by a writing specialist and determined by the student's area of interest: Writing in the Humanities, Writing in the Social Sciences, Writing in the Sciences, Writing in Business and Industry, and so on. The University of Texas combines the two approaches. It has a two course requirement with the Junior year requirement being similar to Maryland's and the Senior year course being like Michigan's. At the University of South Alabama students take two writing-intensive courses, one in their major subject, one in another specialized area of choice. The writing-intensive proposal at the University of Hawaii, then, is clearly a variation of this type.

The virtue of these programs is the certainty that all students will have writing experience in specialty subjects after the Freshman year. The requirement based model seems the preferred approach at large universities where the size and diversity of both the faculty and the student body make consensus and personal contact difficult. The greatest weakness, as discovered by our WAC committee, is that students are given

the false message that writing only counts in certain courses. Institutionally, it is crucial that there be a consistent underlying philosophy. If writing-across-the-curriculum is defined mechanically by the number of pages assigned in given courses, or if writing is conceived narrowly in terms of its "correctness," the program will not endure. Similarly, writing programs that result from administrative fiat will quickly founder because everyone in the institution will have a different idea of what writing is. For any writing-across-the-curriculum program to succeed there must be considerable interchange of ideas about writing among faculty from different disciplines.

These problems are less troublesome at smaller colleges and universities where faculty members have more opportunity for collegial exchange across the disciplines. Diffusion or contagion based programs work on the assumption that writing is a continuous and inescapable part of every student's career. They view writing as a complex activity that requires continual practice. Its presence in every sphere of the curriculum is necessary because writing is seen as a fundamental mode of learning and discovery, an extension of the internal dialogue that always runs in our heads. "Programs" lacking any formal requirements beyond a Freshman composition course can be highly effective because they depend on a resource small colleges and community colleges generally have in greater supply than large universities--professional teachers. Once faculty members realize that writing can help them to teach the subjects better, they become converts--and help to convert others. Students in turn come to accept writing as an assumed part of learning and, as a side benefit, improve their writing skills. Cross-curricular programs that grow in this way are closest to the letter and spirit of the phrase "writing-across-the-curriculum." (It is an ugly phrase but the one we seem to be stuck with.)

What is needed to launch such a project is first and foremost an interested faculty. I think that a Freshman writing program is also a necessity so that students can put into practice in their other courses basic principles learned in Freshman composition. Early on, someone with a special interest in cross-disciplinary writing needs to assume responsibility for initiating workshops and other forms of faculty exchange. Subsequent small group discussions help to establish a network and build a core of committed faculty. At an early point I'd say a writing center is also necessary to free faculty from being copy editors and to keep the emphasis where it belongs, on writing as learning. Timely support from the administration can speed the process, but even without this the momentum can eventually become such that even an unresponsive administration will be unable to resist.

The oldest program of this type I know of was started some ten years ago at Beaver State College in Pennsylvania; one of the newest diffusion based programs is at the University of Vermont where Toby Fulwiler, a prolific advocate of writing-across-the-curriculum, is now director. One doesn't hear about contagion based programs as often as requirement based ones, but that doesn't necessarily mean that they are less numerous. By their very nature such "non-program programs" work informally from the bottom up. I suspect that many liberal arts, community, and technical

colleges are slowly, like Kapiolani Community College, feeling their way towards a solid and successful program without much fanfare or even self-consciousness.

Contagion based programs have problems of their own since what they gain in dispersion they may lose in management and control. For us at Kapiolani there were times when lack of leadership and planning caused a loss of momentum and enthusiasm. This weakness has caused some schools to attempt to create programs that combine features of both the contagion and requirement based approaches. If a requirement based approach is built on a solid foundation of faculty consensus and support, the requirements, whether in the form of specified courses or of special writing assignments in regular courses, could serve to increase general awareness of the importance of writing as an aid to learning rather than giving misleading messages. As long as the atmosphere is such that students feel the importance of writing in all of their subjects, then the special requirements in some courses could reinforce and complement what is being done throughout the curriculum. The east campus of Pima Community College in Arizona, for example, has developed a system in which participating faculty in all disciplines work with writing department faculty to design special writing assignments. These assignments must meet criteria prescribed by the writing department. The student papers generated by these "required" assignments are evaluated by a "Collateral Grader" from the writing department who assigns a grade based on matters of mechanics and composition as well as by the instructor, who grades for content. Although this program seems to me wrong-headed in putting major emphasis on the "correctness" of writing and in forcing what I consider to be an artificial separation between "form" and "content," it does seem, from what I have read about Pima, that this program enjoys widespread faculty and student support. It has, apparently, succeeded in generating campus wide awareness of the importance of writing in all subjects.

As more research is done on the connections between writing and learning and as more is written about different ways of designing writing-across-the-curriculum projects, programs that combine features of the requirement based and contagion based models become more feasible and attractive. But overall it is clear to me that the way we proceeded at Kapiolani was the way that was best for us. Each college must discover for itself the method that will work best. One thing I can say with assurance is that any plan must be the result of college wide discussions and consensus if it is to succeed. My colleagues and I hope that learning about our experience at Kapiolani Community College can help some of you to make the right choices for your colleges.

Sheldon Hershinow
Kapiolani Community College
620 Pensacola Street
Honolulu, Hawaii 96814